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RUSSIA VERSUS COMMUNISM

by I. I. Sikorsky

The United States and other free nations are now facing a grave and sinister danger. Their freedom, independence and all those high principles that make life worth living are challenged by an aggressive, resourceful and resolute adversary. Its plans for domination are based on a cynical philosophy and a ruthless application of brutal force.

This adversary, the Communist Government of the Soviet Union, controls at present a territory which extends from northern China and Korea to Berlin and the Adriatic Sea, and includes over four hundred million inhabitants. The United States is already in a state of ideological and diplomatic conflict with the Government of this huge area. And there is danger that this conflict may become transformed into an actual total war of unprecedented scale and destructiveness.

The chances of preventing this war, or of winning if it should come, depend essentially on a constructive and intelligent American policy, which in turn calls for the correct understanding of the Russian problem as a whole.

The situation in the Soviet Union is characterized by a unique, abnormal and unprecedented relationship between the majority of the Russian people and the historical National State on the one side and the Soviet Communist dictatorship on the other. The interests of these two parties have been brought to coincide at certain special moments, although normally and on all the more important issues they clash with the sharpness that usually features relations between a people and a hostile foreign invader.

Therefore, there cannot be any uniform attitude and policy towards "The Russians". A sound policy, which alone can be constructive and successful, must first recognize the great and friendly Russian people and must assume towards them a sympathetic and understanding attitude.

Simultaneously this policy must consider the Communist dictatorship, with all its servants and fellow travellers over the whole world, as a totally separate entity. It is this movement which constitutes an irreconcilably hostile, aggressive force, and is consequently the enemy.

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II

The majority of the Russian people bitterly dislike their present government and are waiting for an opportunity to liberate their country from this brutal oppression. They do not want a war with the United States or any other country. The Russians -- as such -- do not hate our free institutions and have no desire to see them overthrown.

The Russian people are not in sympathy with the ambitious plans of their present rulers. On the other hand, their patriotic anguish is very intense. Therefore, the Communist leadership will utilize every means of totalitarian control, in the event of conflict, to demonstrate that American policy is directed against the Russian people and its historical national patrimony. Then their determination and power for waging a "national" war would become formidable.

The ideas and intentions of the Communist Government differ radically from the aspirations of the Russian people. There is no doubt that this sinister force, organized on a world-wide scale, fears and hates the free institutions of America and will do everything in its power to see them destroyed. International Communism definitely proposes to dominate the world, and it will use boundlessly dishonest and cruel means in order to fulfill this ambition.

In view of the above facts, it must be stressed that in dealing with the Russian problem we must firmly and clearly differentiate between two formidable entities. The one is a friendly and essentially peaceful people, which in fact constitutes a most valuable potential ally; the other force is a bitter and irreconcilable enemy which would strike secretly or openly at the first opportunity.

A policy of wisdom and foresight will therefore tend to separate, drive a wedge between, these two forces. It will aim to turn the potentially friendly majority of the Russian people into an overt and most important ally. By contrast, an unwise and bungling policy would promote hostility against the whole Russian nation and would aim at the humiliation and dismemberment of the national patrimony.

Such a disastrous attitude would infinitely strengthen the power and prestige of the Soviet regime, and would enable the Kremlin, at least temporarily, to make use of the patriotic fervor of the Russian people for promotion of World Communism.

III

The position of America implies two important advantages:

First: The attitude, policy and action dictated by American national interests coincide with the commands prompted by respect for truth, idealism and humanitarian principles.

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Second: The attitude and policies that make it possible to prevent a war are identical with those which would enable us to win a war, were it to happen.

The right attitude and policy are briefly as follows: It must be stressed that the impending struggle is not against the Russian people, nor a conflict between "West" and "East". The encounter, if any, must be understood and proclaimed to be a crusade against the sinister evil of aggressive totalitarian Communism, and for the liberation of all people oppressed by Communism -- the Russians included.

The threat of the atomic bomb may not frighten the Communist leaders. There is no doubt that they have already constructed vast subterranean quarters in secluded places, to which they can transfer the leadership and all of the more important governmental institutions.

Therefore, in the large cities, our bombs would mainly obliterate women, children and those who would like to be our friends. The major part of Russia's war industries are spread over immense spaces of Siberia and Central Asia. The attempt to cripple them by bombing would be difficult, costly in men and equipment and uncertain as to final results. Personally, I firmly believe that Russia cannot be knocked out by aerial bombardment; not even with atomic bombs.

On the other hand, an attempt to invade a united and hostile Russia with ground forces would face failure and disaster due to the immense distances, absence of roads, severe climate and unparalleled fighting ability of the Russians, particularly in defending their own soil.

Hitler made the greatest mistake of his career when he invaded Russia as an enemy of the nation. When his armies first entered Russian territory, the resistance was very weak. The population was willing to welcome almost anyone who would liberate them from Communist despotism. Hundreds of thousands of men at the front surrendered because they were unwilling to fight for their oppressors.

However, Hitler proved to be a hostile conqueror and an enemy of the whole people -- not only of the Communist dictatorship. The Nazis treated the Russian population and prisoners as a lower race and treated them badly. As this became known, and as it was made clear that the integrity of the mother country was in danger, because Hitler wanted to separate the Ukraine, the people started to fight in earnest, not for the twenty-five year old Communism which they hate, but for the thousand year old Russia. Lend-lease helped a great deal. Nevertheless, all the fighting was done by the Russians, and it was done well.

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Because of the above considerations, the following moves are now evidently in order:

1. The free peoples must proclaim that they have nothing but friendship towards all oppressed nations behind the Iron Curtain, including the Russian people.

2. That they have no intention of humiliating these people or injuring their national patrimonies.

3. That if armed conflict becomes inevitable they will invite these oppressed people to surrender in mass, promising them good and honorable treatment. They must further promise that from among the men who would surrender, or rather join the forces of the free nations, all those loyal to the principles of freedom would be enlisted into national armies of liberation, each to be sent to their own country.

4. Nucleus national organizations and armies should be formed from among the Russians, Poles and others who may be abroad. In case of conflict, these armies must move as a sector of the allied front. They must enter their respective countries in national uniforms, with national flags, with the slogan: "Peace and freedom to the people; war to the oppressors".

To make myself clear, I must state that in the present turbulent time I consider adequate military preparedness, including a most powerful and modern air force, an absolute necessity. Otherwise, our weakness may invite disaster. Nevertheless, the subject of a wise, constructive general policy remains equally or even more important.

A general public attitude and governmental policy on the lines above outlined would be amply justified by the benefits it would incur. It would best serve the vital interest of this country and of other free nations, and it would uphold liberal humanitarian principles.

By contrast, a policy of hatred and indiscriminate hostility against a people in tragic distress -- driven by force against their will -- would prove neither just nor wise. Such a policy would only fortify the evil forces which it is our aim to overcome. It would prolong an eventual war beyond foreseeable limits; immensely increase its cost, and then might end in irredeemable failure.

Igor Sikorsky, the famous aeronautical engineer, was born and educated in Russia, coming to the United States in 1919. He is a member of the Russian Orthodox Church and is author of The Invisible Encounter, a study of Christ's temptation in the wilderness.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events VOL. V, NO. 20

By Frank C. Hanighen May 19, 1948

Stalin's answer to Wallace's speech certainly sets a record in international diplomacy, even in the unconventional recent history of U. S. foreign policy. Never before have we beheld the spectacle of a foreign potentate trying to deal with the U. S. through the medium of a Presidential candidate -- and of a minor party at that. Government circles were quick to observe, privately, that the maneuver was all a little too pat. Wallace proposes a detailed program; a foreign head of State oddly enough finds Wallace's points acceptable as a basis for negotiations. Could there have been some liaison between the entourage of the man from Iowa and that of the man in Moscow?

Be that as it may. The U. S. Government in the past ten days has been heavy-handed, leaden-footed and completely devoid of ideas. It is true that no chancellery can deal with another on the basis of a letter broadcast from Moscow. But, not much imagination and even less knowledge of the issues involved was needed for the White House and State Department to reply effectively to the Molotov note of May. The U. S. could have well retorted to Moscow: If the Soviet Union's intentions are serious, let the Soviet Union make specific proposals for settlement of the key questions of Germany and Austria. Moscow has consistently failed even to try to reach a common ground with us on these matters. If Moscow really should put forward constructive proposals, the U. S. and its Allies would sit down at the table. Moscow might not do so, but at least the U. S. would have done its best. This is the considered judgment of persons, now private citizens, who as officials in previous Administrations shaped foreign policy well and effectively.

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The unseemly, helter-skelter recognition of Israel came as a surprise even to persons who pardonably regard U. S. conduct of foreign policy as a fantastic harlequinade. Officials who are in a position to know say that the White House recognition of the infant State was made without consultation with the State Department, and that officials in the Department first learned of it when the mimeographed releases arrived from the White House secretariat. Even the Zionist leaders prudently did not want recognition at once because of various problems of their own. But when it was proposed to them -- thrust right into their faces -- by the White House, they thought it best to accept the proposal.

Most laymen do not at once see the dangerous implications of unconsidered recognition, whether it be of Israel or others. If the Arabs should win their war quickly, the U. S. would be in an exceedingly embarrassing position -- having recognized a State which overnight ceased to exist, and having offended the victors. If, on the other hand, Israel should prove triumphant, our whole foreign policy and military strategy in the Near East would have to be drastically reconsidered, root and branch. This policy has been based on continuing friendly relations with the Arab States and their neighbors, Turkey and Iran. If the Arabs lose, they (and other Moslems) will not blame Britain or Russia; their resentment will be directed at us. One more observation -- the White House scramble to "get ahead of Russia" in recognizing Israel seems today to have been a brief victory. We tendered de facto recognition to Israel; Russia trumped our card by granting de jure recognition. Even on the assumption that the "beat Russia to it" policy was sound, the Government bungled. A week of blundering and confusion, indeed.

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The election of General Li Tsung-jen as Vice President of China is an event of no little importance in China. As long ago as August 2, 1944, HUMAN EVENTS drew attention to the fact that the Kwangsi generals (of whom Li is a prominent figure)

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offered the best hope of liberalism in China. This group over a period of years carried through real agrarian reforms in their province. These reforms substantially bettered the hard lot of the peasants, and challenged the Communist pretension to the title "protector of the rural masses". At the same time, these Kwangsi generals proved their staunch patriotism by fighting the Communists, often at great sacrifice to themselves. General Li's election should help answer American criticism that Chiang Kai-shek's Government is completely "reactionary".

Freda Utley, in a NANA dispatch (Washington Evening Star, May 10) says that General Li's election "marks the emergence inside the ruling Kuomintang party of a reform movement strong enough to break the monopoly hold of the old guard politicians. They [the Kwangsi group] are far less inclined to appease Russia than Sun Fo, the rival candidate for the Vice Presidency, who was backed by the reactionaries as well as by some so-called liberal elements, and who (as Sun Yat-sen's son and a scion of the powerful Soong family) enjoys both prestige and financial backing. . . . Sun Fo is regarded as a liberal in the United States, whereas General Li -- who has a better title to this designation -- is little known."

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The Southern Democrats meeting in Mississippi last week turned out to be little more than a sounding board for oratory. Northern observers who were present say that none of the leaders could be expected to bolt the Party, or even to support any concrete proposals for separatism. Forensics of the "rebel yell" variety prevailed. But observers believe that they were principally designed to assist the orators in their own local political situations. It's sure-fire stuff for demonstrating that the orator is an Ur-Southerner. The only definite decision of the "Dixiecrats" was to hold a separate convention next July -- if the Democratic National Convention fails to repudiate Mr. Truman and his civil rights policy.

Nevertheless, Capital talk about a real revolt in the Convention persists. One political observer predicts that at Philadelphia, Senator Lister Hill will rise first (Alabama is first on the roll) and place Eisenhower's name in nomination; Arkansas will second the motion; California will pass and recanvass the delegation, etc. Thus will the Eisenhower bid be launched, whether the General wills it or not. Majority opinion dismisses that prophecy. Truman, it is insisted, is as good as renominated now. He effectively controls a majority of the delegations through his power of patronage. He will be renominated.

However, the White House is earnestly considering how to appease the rampant Southerners. The Palace Guard would like to find a real "deep South" figure to run as Vice President with Truman, but so far the quest has been in vain. Accordingly, the provisional selection is Attorney General Tom Clark. He is a Southerner, a Texan, and reportedly would like to have the nomination.

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Behind closed doors in the Senate Majority Policy Committee on May 14, there took place a spirited fight which may have no little bearing on the course of Congress during the rest of the session. The handling of the conscription bill was the point at issue. Senator Gurney, Chairman of the Committee, has reported out a combined draft-UMT bill which must be debated on the Senate floor. Senator Taft has served notice that he will fight the UMT provision; Gurney is whole-heartedly behind the bill as it stands. The House supports a draft; but not UMT. With the support of the Southern bloc and a few Republicans, the Gurney "combined" bill might pass the Senate. A conflict would then ensue between the Republican House and Republi-

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can Senate -- hardly a reassuring picture for the GOP delegates as they prepare to go to Philadelphia. Republican Senate leaders, therefore, would like to compose the House-Senate differences before debate starts.

That is what they tried to do, behind closed doors on May 14. A formidable group -- Vandenberg, Taft, Wherry, Ferguson -- urged dropping UMT, concentrating support on the draft, conferring with House leaders to bring forth a bill generally satisfactory to both Houses, before debate starts. Additionally, they should add a provision that the draft should only go into effect when and if a summer trial of voluntary recruiting failed -- and then only by Presidential order. Thus, the responsibility for enforcing the draft would be placed on the President. No good purpose, the Senators warned, would be served by a protracted debate in the Senate, and a clash between the two chambers. But Senator Gurney opposed all these recommendations -- and the matter was left up in the air when the session closed.

After the session was over, Gurney's side of the argument quickly reached the press, so it was not surprising that opposing Senators were provoked into giving their version. Gurney, they charged, has always been "the representative of the General Staff in the Senate". It is proper that the views of the Army should be fairly presented in the Senate, but not that a Senator heading the requisite Committee should slavishly forward in toto all proposals of the General Staff. Gurney held the hearings on the UMT bill and draft in a dictatorial fashion; staging them so as to reduce the effect, as much as possible, of testimony critical of UMT. Now, Gurney proposes to carry on an "armed services filibuster" in opposition to the best interests of Congress and Party.

All this inter-Party bitterness may disappear before the bill reaches the floor; a compromise may be reached ere then. However, the dispute lights up two phenomena familiar to those who study Capitol Hill: (1) the tendency of chairmen of Defense committees to conform closely to the ideas of the Defense services; and (2) the attempt to integrate Party policy in Congress with Party campaign considerations in an election year.

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Even the Talmudists of the Dow-Jones theory concede that one cause (a lesser one, they insist) of the stock market boom is the recent income tax reduction. Some economists give considerable weight to this factor, although they admit that it is statistically impossible to prove. The tax cut, they argue, has released a sizeable quantity of investment capital which is seeking this outlet at Broad and Wall. At any rate, continued rise of stock values -- if not merely a measure of a depreciating dollar -- should stimulate increased new equity financing. If this should take place, those who urged reduction of taxes in order to stimulate the placing of venture capital will stand justified. The foregoing proposition is stated in the conditional tense, because it is too soon to find statistical evidence of an expanding venture-capital market. Technical delays involved in issuance of that kind of new security will hold up for several months any positive appraisal.

Even if affirmative evidence does appear, the extent of such a capital movement is bound to be restricted. For one thing, the prevailing opinion is that there will be no further reduction in taxes next year; instead, a possible rise in tax rates looms. For another, the present tax cut on high incomes (source of venture capital) is insufficient really to provide enough venture capital for our expanded economy's needs. Competent economists in Washington present the following argument (approximate estimates): Last year's net equity financing amounted to about $1.3 billion. The amount of capital released by this year's tax cut is estimated at somewhat less than $1 billion. The amount needed really to meet the requirements of the economy is estimated at about $5 billion. It is doubtful that the market could absorb any such volume of equity offerings.

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Book Events

Witness to the Truth: Christ and His Interpreters, by Edith Hamilton. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., $3.00. Reviewed by Felix Morley.

Soon or late the student of the classics must concern himself with the mystery of religion. For this there is more than one reason, but perhaps the imperative roots in the fact that religious thought, as distinct from ethics, played only a minor role in the flowering of both Greece and Rome. What was lacking in early Mediterranean civilization that Christianity brought into the world? Or, alternatively, what did Socrates and Marcus Aurelius possess that we have lost?

Gibbon set forth one balance sheet, between refined Paganism and primitive Christianity. Now Edith Hamilton, who is certainly Gibbon's equal as a classicist, presents another. Her findings do not parallel those set forth with ponderous animosity in the Decline and Fall. But they will arouse similar controversy.

Writing with that finely chiseled prose which made her Greek Way distinctive, Miss Hamilton now proceeds to remove the layers of awe and superstition with which the personality of Christ is overlaid. Witness to the Truth is a brilliant accomplishment and it comes at the psychological moment. Naturally we do not like to think of our generation as one of the most brutal which has ever disgraced the name of humanity, and there seems no valid reason why the kingdom of God should not be represented on the Security Council of the United Nations. Implicitly, Miss Hamilton does much to explain why this sovereignty was forgotten -- at Dumbarton Oaks, at San Francisco, and lately at that sardonically titled maelstrom called "Lake Success".

To the lay reader, Miss Hamilton's examination of the Gospels will probably prove the most exciting part of a book which grips the attention from its deliberately revolutionary opening sentence: "Christianity is Christ." There is absorbing interest in the detached analysis of how the Gospels were written; the profound but never pedantic consideration of the contrasting personalities of the authors; the unpretentious exegesis designed not to obscure but to simplify the character of Jesus. Miss Hamilton could write a grand detective story. Many will call her blessed, which she reminds us is in Greek the same word as "happy", for using her deductive talents in a field which has been too much usurped by the Casaubons.

The essay on St. Paul -- for this book is really a series of perfectly mortised essays -- is less novel, but equally searching and beautiful. And the sympathetic reader will particularly enjoy this chapter because of Miss Hamilton's conviction that: "Some experience in Paul's early life had colored all his thought of women", a subject where he "always" lost his "sure grasp of the essential". There is good and sufficient reason for this feminist excursion. Witness to the Truth is more rather than less endearing because the author at this point is authoress.

To some people, however, Miss Hamilton's study will not be endearing. At many a turn of the road she travels, theologians will spring from ambush with dogmatic cudgels. And the pilgrim may receive some shrewd blows. It is not derogatory to Socrates to suggest that perhaps he merits a little less space -- in this particular book -- than is accorded him. There is no adulation of Aquinas or Augustine in suggesting that the obiter dicta are something less than kind to them.

But this is merely to say, with Miss Hamilton, that nothing is more individual than one's religious faith, and nothing can be more personal than the path which is followed in expressing it. That chosen by Miss Hamilton may be irritating to some, but it will give comfort and solace to many more. Christ lives for her. And she has written a book in which his infinite love breaks through the barriers reared by organized adoration.

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